



Cashing in on Old Wisdom

India's traditional weavers, heirs to a 2,000-year-old textile industry are turning to the ancient practice of [ayurvedic medicine](#) to make their products more appealing and boost sales. Drawing on recipes once used by weavers to the Indian royal courts, clothes are woven and infused with ayurvedic, herb-and-spice medicinal recipes to address various health problems. Strange as it may sound, the health-giving properties of the clothes have been backed up by clinical trials at the [Government Ayurveda College in Thiruvananthapuram](#), southern India.

The college claims the trials were successful for 40 patients with rheumatism, allergies, hypertension, diabetes, psoriasis and other skin ailments. It is believed the healing properties of the herb-and-spice infused clothes enter the skin and contribute to healing.

Modern India's founding father, Mahatma Gandhi, championed hand spun cloth and weaving. But India's weavers have been hit hard by the rise in the rupee against the dollar and an inability to compete internationally. They are facing stiff competition from a flood of machine-made cheap clothing. According to Siddique Hassan of the Weaver and Artisans Rights Front (WARF), 1 million of India's 5 million weavers have lost their jobs because of competition (Deutsche Presse Agentur).

But rising interest in sustainability and natural healing is creating a growing global market for organic clothes – sales are set to triple to U \$2.6 billion in 2008 (Organic Exchange).

Against this backdrop, local governments have turned to traditional ayurvedic medicine to help save the livelihoods of handloom weavers and develop a market niche for their eco-friendly fabrics.

In the technique called [Ayurveda](#), the clothes are dyed with herba essences, infusing the cotton with the medicine. More than 200 herbs are used, mostly taken from roots, flowers, leaves, seeds and bark. Most of the clothes are made with cotton and silk, and some with wool and jute. A dress is marketed to people who suffer from hypertension. There are bedcovers, pillow covers, nightgowns, and even suits. It is believed the healing effect is best when the patient is sleeping.

The clothes are made in Balaramapuram, home to traditional weaving in Kerala, southern India, and sell for between 1,000 and 1,800 rupee (US \$25 to US \$45). Ayurveda clothing is currently being exported to the Middle East, the US, Italy, Germany, Britain, Singapore, Malaysia and Jordan.

Acknowledging traditional medicine as a useful development tool goes back to the [World Health Organisation's Alma-Ata Declaration in 1978](#) which urged governments for the first time to include traditional medicine in their primary health systems and recognise traditional medicine practitioners as health workers. During the last 30 years there has been a considerable expansion in the use of traditional medicine across the world. Despite their ancient origins, it is still critical these medicines do meet efficacy and health standards and are proven to work.

Ayurveda is a branch of the 5,000-years-old [Indian ayurveda health system](#). Ayur means health in Sanskrit, veda means wisdom, and vastra is cloth or clothing. There are no synthetic chemicals and toxic irritants and the technique uses organic cotton that has been hand loomed.

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"The entire process is organic," said K. Rajan, chief technician at the [Handloom Weavers Development Society in India](#), to Zee News. "The cloth is bleached with cow's urine, which has high medicinal value. The dyeing gum too is herbal. It does not pollute like synthetic dye. And the waste is used as bio manure and to generate bio gas."

Chaitanya Arora of Penchant Traders, an Indian company promoting and exporting ayurvedic cloth and clothing, tells how it works: "Usage of the cloth is based on the principle of touch. By coming in contact with ayurvedic, the body loses toxins and its metabolism is enhanced."

One clothes buyer, T D Kriplani, told Zee News, "Basically, I have read about the concept in newspapers... I was inquisitive and have also heard that it is in direct touch with body pores. I have come here after reading about it and hope it will benefit people." It is even claimed the clothes can keep people cool.

Another seller of ayurvedic, Hitesh, is enthusiastic about its impact: "The medicinal clothes that we have launched is a new revolution in the textile industry. In there, we dye the clothes with ayurvedic dyes and the clothes have medicinal qualities, which hopefully are good for diseases."

LINKS:

- [Think! Clothing](#): A stylish UK-based designer using fair-trade, hand woven clothes from Indian women from the 'untouchable' caste.
- An online shopping site based in Kerala, India offers a wide range of the ayurvedic clothing: <http://www.ayurvedaonline.com/>
 - [Fibre2Fashion](#): An excellent web portal can be found here to connect weavers with the wider fashion industry – basically an online marketplace for making deals.
- Asia-Pacific Traditional Medicine and Herbal Technology Network: an excellent first stop for any entrepreneur, where they can find out standards and regulations and connect with education and training opportunities: www.apctt-tm.net and www.aptm.cn

Prisons with Green Solutions

An ingenious solution is helping Rwanda reduce the cost of running its bursting prisons, while improving conditions for the prisoners and helping protect the environment.

The country's prison population soared to a peak of 120,000 suspects awaiting trial for their role in the 1994 genocide, in which 800,000 Tutsis and moderate Hutus were killed. The traditional court system, gacaca, is being used for national reconciliation, but the process is slow and costly for a country where 90 per cent of the population exist on subsistence agriculture, and where food production has dropped below 70 per cent of the levels needed for self-sufficiency (USAID).

But thanks to enormous, bee-hive shaped human manure digesters, a steady supply of biogas is on tap for cooking and lighting at prisons – the first country in Africa to do this. Five of the country's largest prisons – two at Gitarama and one each in Butare, Kigali and Cyangugu – now have biogas plants producing 50 per cent of the gas needed to cook for prisoners. It has also saved half of each prison's US \$44,000 a year firewood costs. The money saved is being ploughed back into renovations to the prisons to improve conditions, and to provide more services like healthcare.

[Biogas](#) is produced from the fermentation of household or agricultural waste or animal or human feces, and has become a viable alternative when traditional gas sources become more expensive. The waste is placed in a 150 cubic meter beehive-shaped digester and fermented until a gas is produced. According to lead engineer on the project, Ainea Kimaro, 100 cubic meters of waste is turned into 50 cubic meters of fuel by bacteria devouring the manure in just four weeks.

The digesters are a project of the [Kigali Institute of Sciences, Technology and Management's Center for Innovations and Technology Transfer](#).

"Biogas kills two birds with one stone," Kimaro told the BBC. It gets rid of all the human waste and helps cover the enormous costs of feeding so many prisoners. Prior to the digesters, the quantity of human waste was a real problem: it was flooding down hillsides and leaking into rivers and lakes.

A school, the Lycee de Kigali, also has a digester. "The methane gas is used to cook for 400 students and for operating Bunsen burners in the school laboratories", Kimaro said.

Many would think this a smelly affair, but in fact the whole process isn't that pungent. Most of the digester is underground and the gas produced burns a clean, blue smokeless flame. It is much cleaner than the smoke from firewood. The remaining sludgy residue is used as an odourless compost for soil. This is used in the prison gardens to grow maize, mangos, bananas and tomatoes – all of which ends up back on the prisoner's plates, improving the quality of their nutrition.

"The firewood savings are excellent - they really make a difference for us," a Cyangugu prison warden said, adding that the odour-free compost had done wonders for the prison gardens. "Look at all these bananas! This fertiliser really is the best," he said to the BBC.

In Uganda, human urine and feces are being mixed with banana peels, algae, water hyacinth and poultry droppings to make biogas. In Uganda's rural Mukono district, biogas is used for cooking, lighting pressure lamps and to power engines. The slurry left over is then used to fertilise the soil. For Ugandans, most of whom are rural dwellers, electricity is rare and petrol to run generators and refrigeration units is expensive.

"It keeps the environment free of organic wastes, is convenient, time-saving and reduces smoke-related illnesses often associated with the use of firewood," said Patrick Nalere, country director of the [Heifer Project International](#), an American NGO which shares livestock and knowledge to reduce poverty. "If the majority of Ugandans adopted biogas, we would preserve our biodiversity. People should exploit decomposing raw materials, which are free. Therefore, no monthly power tariffs."

LINKS:

- [Practical Action](#) has technical drawings and guidelines for making a small biogas digester.
- [The Anaerobic Digestion Community](#): Here is an excellent technical explanation of how a digester works, including a short film.
- China is boasting a fast-growing biogas economy using farm waste. Here is a full summary of their experience: <http://www.i-sis.org.uk/BiogasChina.php>.

Envisioning Better Slums

More than 900 million people – almost a sixth of the world’s population – now live in urban slums (UN). Improving conditions for these people is a critical Millennium Development Goal target. And the scale of the problem is vast: this year half the world’s population will live in cities, and already in developing countries 43 per cent of urban dwellers live in slums. In the least-developed countries the figure is 78 per cent.

The UN has estimated it will take US\$18 billion a year to improve living conditions for these people – and most of it will have to come from the residents themselves.

An essential route to improving the situation is to give people living in slums the dignity and respect they deserve as human beings. Initiatives across the South seek to do this and turn the situation on its head: seeing slum dwellers as a valuable asset, not an urban blight.

The concept of ‘slum networking’ has been developed by Indian engineer Himanshu Parikh of Ahmedabad, a winner of the Aga Khan award for architecture. He starts from the point of believing there is no need for slum conditions to exist in India, but that slums do not need to be moved, just upgraded; and that good change can happen quickly. He also sees the residents’ involvement and financial contribution as critical to the sustainability of any improvements. His approach has already helped one million people overall, including 8,703 families (43,515 people) in Ahmedabad in 41 slum communities.

Slum networking does not depend on aid funds but is a self-reliant approach, in which residents make a partnership with private suppliers to get access to the most important services first: clean water and hygiene and sanitation.

Parikh’s approach involves providing channels for sewage, water supply and roadways in existing slum areas by exploiting the natural topography and pattern of development to provide the new infrastructure.

Parikh makes a detailed survey plan of the existing houses and divides them into groups based on the quality of construction. If they are of reasonable quality, they are left in place. Where possible, slum dwellers are allowed to buy the land they are squatting on. By buying the land, the owner now has a direct stake in its development.

“Working inside out, i.e. starting with quality infrastructure in the poor areas and working outwards to produce larger networks for the city or village, not only integrates the two levels, but actually produces far cheaper infrastructure at both levels,” Parikh told Architecture Week magazine.

In the Indian city of Indore, 181 slums were networked, giving the city 360 kilometres of new roads, 300 kilometres of new sewer lines, 240 kilometres of new water lines, 120 community halls and 120,000 trees. This transformed the two local rivers from open sewers back to water. According to the World Bank, the incidence of fatal water diseases fell by 90 per cent.

“No project for their rehabilitation could be successful until they were involved as the capital partners,” Parikh told India’s The Tribune. Upgrading “the civic amenities, including sewerage, roads and water supply, was the need of the hour for better living conditions of the slum dwellers.”

Another initiative in Bangladesh is bringing first-rate healthcare to the country’s water-logged slum dwellers. They live in areas called ‘chars’ -- effectively stranded islands surrounded by rivers, plagued by frequent flooding and physically cut-off from the country’s transport and infrastructure networks. Located in northern Bangladesh’s Jamuna river regions of Gaibandha, Kurigram and Jamalpu, these areas are very poor and overlooked by most government and foreign aid programmes. The fact the islands shift around has made it difficult for much help to reach the people.

Bangladesh also has a severe shortage of doctors: there are 12,500 people per doctor, compared to 2,000 in Pakistan.

But a hospital ship run by the Friendship NGO (funded by private companies and NGOs) now brings healthcare to 4 million people, treating everything from cataracts to skin infections. It sees between 200 to 250 patients a day aboard a converted former river barge. Called the Lifebuoy Friendship Hospital because of its sponsorship by Lever Brothers Bangladesh Ltd. -- makers of Lifebuoy soap -- it cruises the river Brammaptura, helping 172,000 people since it set sail six years ago.

“People of the area look forward eagerly to our arrival,” said Dr Feroza Khatun, a doctor on the hospital ship. Other doctors and surgeons are provided by NGOs from Sweden, the Netherlands and France.

The ship carries a team of two doctors and four nurses, who live on board. It provides a range of services, from basic healthcare and immunisations to minor surgery. The ship is fully equipped with modern facilities, including clinics, a pharmacy, a treatment room and an operating theatre. There is also a four-bed ward for short-term care, a pathology lab and store, x-ray unit and dark room and an electrocardiogram (ECG).

Stays in the individual ‘chars’ are usually from three weeks to two months. When it leaves, a satellite clinic continues to provide care until the next visit. “In our satellite programmes, we bring in professionals for health and rural social education, provide paramedical care, give special treatment for mother and child

health, family planning and pregnancy hazards, child nutrition and identify the needs for secondary care interventions,” said executive director Runa Khan to Bangladesh’s Star Weekend Magazine

Started as a trial in 2001, the ship began full operations in 2002. It has been so successful, it is currently expanding by building new ships paid for by the Emirates Airline Foundation.

LINKS:

- [Shelter Associates](#): established by Indian architect Pratima Joshi, an NGO working on slum rehabilitation.
- [SPARC](#): one of the largest Indian NGOs working on housing and infrastructure issues for slum dwellers.
 - [Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers](#): published by the Millennium Project.
- [Slum TV](#): Based deep inside Nairobi’s largest slum, Mathare, they have been seeking out the stories of hope where international media only see violence and gloom.

Mobile Phone Peacekeeping

Last month UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon pointed out the urgent need for interesting and relevant content to attract Africans to the internet. Official statistics can make for grim reading: the continent has less bandwidth than Ireland (World Economic Forum). While it is true Africa is restricted by serious technological and economic disadvantages, African ingenuity, creativity and hard work are bypassing these impediments to get things done nonetheless. While word has got out about the impressive take-up of mobile phones in Africa, the new world of Web 2.0 is also spawning a new generation of inspiring African technology whizzes transforming perceptions and grabbing the world's attention.

Alongside the combination of innovation and affordability that has made Africa the fastest growing mobile phone market in the world, there is a home-grown technology boom underway; "African firms are already participating in the forefront of technological developments and investment opportunities," according to the [Africa Competitiveness Report 2007](#).

Powerful and easy-to-use Web 2.0 tools are being used by Africans during times of crisis. Among the most innovative are "mash-ups" – a term once used to refer to the musical style of combining two or more song tracks that has come to mean the blending together of various software programmes. These Web 2.0 software mashups combine weather information, maps, webcams, population figures, even restaurant locations – in fact any application that can be easily added to a website. The possibilities are limitless, and this is what is causing so much excitement for development in the South.

In Kenya, a website called [Ushahidi](#) (Swahili for testimony), is using ICT (information and communications technology) and mobile phones to save lives in the post-election violence. People on the ground can send in live situation reports and alerts through the web and mobile phones to the website, which then maps violence in real time.

According to the site's originator, Kenyan Ory Okolloh, Ushadi.com "is a tool for people who witness acts of violence in Kenya in these post-election times. You can report the incident that you have seen, and it will appear on a map-based view for others to see."

It has been put together by Kenyan web developer David Kobia (also the developer of [Mashada](#), an online African community), and inspired by African blogger [Erik "Hash" Hersman](#) and other Kenyan bloggers and activists.

At the start of the violence, Okolloh had put out a message for help on the web. "Google Earth supposedly shows in great detail where the damage is being done on the ground," Okolloh said on the site. "It occurs to me that it will be useful to keep a record of this, if one is thinking long-term. For the reconciliation process to occur at the local level the truth of what happened will first have to come out. Guys looking to do something - any techies out there willing to do a mashup of where the violence and destruction is occurring using Google Maps?"

The website came together quite quickly: after initial discussions amongst the team of five on January 5, it was live by January 9 (they estimate 40 hours for development and 20 to 30 hours for testing and promotion).

For others who want to do the same, the key is good relationships, not necessarily technology, the Ushahidi team says. "My advice is to make sure you're well networked with the right people before something like this is needed," said Erik Hersman, who runs [Afrigadget](#) and [White African](#) blogs. "By the time you need a site like Ushahidi, it's too late to start making connections, it's time to build ... everyone needs the passion to fulfill the vision of the project."

And to keep it going is not that time consuming, they say. The largest part of their time is spent keeping in contact with NGOs and a volunteer network in Kenya, and verifying the information.

"My advice would be to keep things as simple as possible.," said Kenyan David Kobia. "Mashups are basically methods of relaying data, so simplicity is absolutely key."

"The feedback has been phenomenal. Ushahidi's graphical representation of events illustrates to some degree the magnitude of the events to people outside Kenya. The enormity of the situation can be understood better as events unfold, keeping everyone in the loop with a point of reference - people tend to become apathetic when regular news moves from the front page."

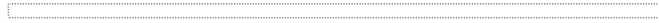
Ushahidi has been praised for providing NGOs, the international community and humanitarian agencies with vital information they can use to help people.

Kobia has also launched a new mashup to promote Kenyan unity called [ihavenotribe](#).

[AfricaNews.com](#) has also been turning to mobile phones to get the news out on the Kenyan crisis. The agency's reporters use internet-enabled mobile phones with portable keyboards to transmit photos, video and text for reports. All of it is uploaded to the [www.africanews.com](#) website. Some are calling this the first use of mobile phone journalism in Africa.

LINKS:

- [Pambazuka](#) News Action Alert blog for Kenya updates.
- Web 2.0 tools that are for free and how to use them: an excellent resource from San Francisco's [Techsoup](#).
- An excellent set of links to Web 2.0 tools and which ones are free, is here: [directimpactnow.com](#)
 - [Mashups.com](#) has the latest news and links to get involved in this new internet phenomenon:
- [Programmable Web](#): This outstanding website links to all active mashups on the web by category and gives real-time reports on progress and lots of links and support to get started.
- African Web 2.0: 2007 was a busy year for African Web 2.0 sites, as they have grown in number and sophistication. Here you can see an at-a-glance collage of the sites' logos and links to them: [flickr.com](#)



- **China and India Learning From Each Other: Reforms and Policies for Sustained Growth**
by Jahangir Aziz, Steven Vincent Dunaway, and Eswar Prasad, Publisher: International Monetary Fund.
Website: www.imf.org
- **The Improving State of the World: Why We're Living Longer, Healthier, More Comfortable Lives on a Cleaner Planet**
by Indur M. Goklany.
Website: www.amazon.com
- **Making Foreign Investment Safe: Property Rights and National Sovereignty**
by Louis T. Wells and Rafiq Ahmed, Publisher: Oxford University Press.
Website: www.amazon.com
- **"Profitable Business Models and Market Creation in the Context of Deep Poverty: A Strategic View"**
by Christina Seelos and Johanna Mair of the IESE Business School.
Website: <http://www.iese.edu/research/pdfs/OP-07-06-E.pdf>
- **"Poverty Reduction for Profit? A Critical Examination of Business Opportunities at the Bottom of the Pyramid"**
by Jean-Louis Warnholz of University of Oxford.
Website: www.eldis.org
- **"Going Wireless: Dialing for Development"**
by David Lehr, it explores the role of mobile devices in expanding economic opportunity for the Bottom of the Pyramid poor.
Website: www.acumenfund.org

Upcoming Events

MARCH

- **Global Forum on Human Resources for Health – Announcement and Call for Papers**
Kampala, Uganda (2-7 March 2008)
--The Global Health Workforce Alliance will convene the first-ever Global Forum on Human Resources for Health.
Email: ghwaforum@who.int
- **African Women and Youth Conference**
Accra, Ghana (8 March 2008)
--Hosted by the African Women's Charity Organization, the theme is the importance of self-reliance. The conference is part of a wider campaign to educate, mobilize and organize the largest number of African women and youth as possible.
Email: ForAfricanWomen@aol.com
Website: [For Africa Women](http://ForAfricaWomen)
- **Partnering for Global Health Forum 2008**
Washington D.C., USA (10-12 March 2008)
--Sponsored by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the forum is to bring together leaders from the biopharmaceutical industry, academia, the global health community, developed and developing country government officials, international NGOs and the donor community to accelerate the development of medicines for neglected diseases of the developing world.
Email: pghforum@bvgh.org
Website: www.pghforum.org
- **2nd Global Summit on HIV/AIDS, Traditional Medicine and Indigenous Knowledge**
Accra, Ghana (10-14 March 2008)
--Sponsored by the Ghana Ministry of Health, the World Health Organization, UNAIDS Ghana Office, Ghana AIDS Commission and Esperanza Medicines Foundation.
Website: africa-first.com
- **World Biofuels Markets Congress**
Brussels, Belgium (12-13 March 2008)
--This is Europe's largest world biofuels networking event with over 1,000 attendees. The aim of this event is to assist growth in the world biofuels industry in a timely and efficient manner.
Contact: Annie Ellis, Green Power Conferences
Email: annie.elis@greenpowerconferences.com
Website: www.worldbiofuelsmarkets.com
- **Social Business and Microeconomic Opportunities for Youth**
Denver, Colorado (12-14 March 2008)
--Organized by Regis University and Friends of Microcredit, the conference is designed as an action space for social entrepreneurs, microfinance practitioners, business leaders, students, and thought influencers who address the issue of poverty with a particular focus on youth. Keynote speaker: Muhammad Yunus, 2006 Nobel Peace Prize Winner.
Contact: Tana Myers

Email: tanamyers@gmail.com

■ **China Towards 2020: Development Goals and Policy Options**

Beijing, China (23-24 March 2008)

--The 9th annual meeting of the China Development Forum, with participation of the OECD.

Website: www.oecd.org

■ **The 2008 Emerging Markets Private Equity Forum**

New York, USA (27-28 March 2008)

--Building on the success of three previous emerging markets events in London, the forum will focus on some of the following themes: emerging markets and the private equity landscape, data trends analysis – looking beyond India and China, managing risk in emerging markets.

Website: www.peimedia.com

■ **UNESCO International Conference and Exhibition on Knowledge Parks**

Doha, Qatar (29 March 2008)

--The conference is jointly organized with the "Qatar Foundation" in close cooperation with "Bibliotheca Alexandrina", "Global Knowledge Partnership" and "Oman's Knowledge Oasis". The conference is aimed at bringing together: policy makers, experts in the fields of knowledge management and innovation\technology parks, representatives of the private sector and donor organizations including development banks, to share views and experiences and to map such experiences for the benefit of developing countries.

Website: www.unesco.org

■ **Microenterprise and Development Institute – Ghana**

"Tools of the Trade for Development Practitioners" Accra, Ghana (31 March to April 12, 2008)

--The School of CED in partnership with the Ghana Microfinance Institutions Network are offering a two-week training programme in: microfinance essential skills, pro-poor market development, and community economic development.

Contact: Mr Sanjeev Sharma

Email: mdi@snhu.edu

Website: www.mdi-sa.org

April

■ **International Banana Conference 2008**

Mombasa, Kenya (7-11 April 2008)

--Organized by the International Institute of Tropical Agriculture, the conference focuses on banana and plantain research across Africa, lessons learned and the way forward. A major objective of the conference is to foster international partnerships.

Email: t.dubois@cgiar.org

Website: www.banana2008.org

■ **Africa: International Conference on African Culture and Development**

Kumasi, Ghana (21-26 April 2008)

--The conference is designed to draw attention to the missing link in the futile attempts to develop the African continent – culture.

Website: www.icacd.ccoghana.org

■ **Rethinking Poverty: Making Policies Work for Children – Conference and Call for Papers**

New York, USA (21-23 April 2008)

--UNICEF and the Graduate Program in International Affairs at the New School will jointly host an international conference to review and mobilise the international agenda on ending child poverty and reducing disparities.

Website: www.crin.org

May

■ **International Workshop on HIV/AIDS 2008**

Varadero, Cuba (4-9 May 2008)

--Organized by the Cuban Society for Immunology and Latin American Association of Immunology, it will explore latest experiences in HIV/AIDS.

Email: tapanes@ipk.sld.cu or Rolando.tapanes@gmail.com

Website: www.sci.sld.cu

■ **Fashion Africa 2008**

Nairobi, Kenya (8-11 May 2008)

--The exhibition is the place to discover the latest ideas and attract a whole new audience. FASHION AFRICA will be the international meeting point for fashion designers / companies to showcase their new Fashion and style products, innovations, equipment and concepts from the Fashion Industry.

Website: www.arabianexposition.com

■ **International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training**

Accra, Ghana (28-30 May 2008)

--The 3rd International Conference on ICT for Development, Education and Training is the premier gathering place for all experts and stakeholders engaged or interested in ICT-based projects in Africa.

Website: elearning-africa.com

July

- **Fifth Pan-Commonwealth Forum on Open Learning**

London, UK (13-17 July 2008)

--Applications are invited for participation in the Forum. It has grown to become one of the world's leading conferences on learning and global development. This year, it will explore how open and distance learning can help achieve international development goals and education for all.

Website: www.pcf5.london.ac.uk

- **2nd General Assembly and Conference of African Council for Distance Education**

Lagos, Nigeria (8-11 July 2008)

--Sponsored by the African Council for Distance Education and the National Open University of Nigeria.

Website: nou.du.ng

August

- **2nd International Conference: Third Sector Innovation: Sustainability and Social Impact**

Sao Paulo, Brazil (18 August 2008)

--The focus this year is to continue to raise the profile of the valuable work of social enterprise leaders across Latin America, to share best practices and cases of social innovations.

Email: joao.paulo@gesc.org.br or ashpak@umich.edu

September

- **TEDAfrica: A gathering of the greatest thinkers and doers from Africa and the world**

Cape Town, South Africa (29 September to 1 October 2008)

--What if Africa had no borders? What if her boundaries extended as far as those living in the diaspora, or even further? What if you could fly directly from Cape Town to Cairo, Lagos to Luanda, Bujumbura to Abuja? Or what if you could drive to every city and every town and every village? What if the Internet was a reality for every African? What if you could call the world from atop the Kilimanjaro, or from deep in the forests of the Congo?

Website: tedafrica

November

- **South Africa: The Power of Movements – [Announcement and call for proposals](#)**

Cape Town, South Africa (14-17 November 2008)

--Up to 1,500 women's rights activists from around the world will gather to debate and strategize about how to build a stronger global women's movement. Proposals are sought for organizing a session.

Website: www.awid.org

Training Opportunities

ONGOING

- **Grameen Bank Microcredit Training Programs**

[Grameen Info](#)

- **System Dynamics-based Development Planning Course**

Bergen, Norway (31 March – 9 May 2008)

--Millennium Institute's six-week System Dynamics-based Development Planning Course equips participants with the knowledge and skills required to effectively analyze these challenges and determine the best approaches to mitigating them. The course is designed for policy advisors, planning technicians, advocacy and civil society groups, policy research institutions, private foundations, and bilateral development agencies.

Email: ao@millennium-institute.org

Website: www.millennium-institute.org/courses

FELLOWSHIP OPPORTUNITY

- **Funding - Google.org**

--While SMEs in rich countries represent half of GDP, they are largely absent from the formal economies of developing countries. Today, there are trillions of investment dollars chasing returns – and SMEs are a potentially high impact, high return investment. However, only a trickle of this capital currently reaches SMEs in developing countries. Our goal is to increase this flow.

We want to show that SMEs can be profitable investments. We will do this by focusing on lowering transaction costs, deepening capital markets to increase liquidity, and catalyzing capital for investment.

Website: www.google.org

- **Srijan Microfinance Business Plan Competition 2008**

--Intellect and Aavishkaar Goodwill and The Financial Express have launched this competition to search for entrepreneurs, groups, individuals and microfinance institutions with innovative ideas and viable business models to promote the financial inclusion of the poor.

Deadline: March 15, 2008

[Website: www.srijan2008.com](http://www.srijan2008.com)

■ **Piramal Foundation in India**

--Has established a US \$25,000 prize for ideas that help advance full access to effective public health care in India. The Piramal Prize is a \$25,000 Social Entrepreneurship Competition focused on democratizing health care in India that seeks to encourage and support bold entrepreneurial ideas which can profoundly impact access to higher standards of health for India's rural and marginalized urban communities. The award recognizes high-impact, scalable business models and innovative solutions that directly or indirectly address India's health-care crisis.

[Website: www.piramalprize.org](http://www.piramalprize.org)

■ **The Pioneers of Prosperity Grant and Award**

--This competition is a partnership between the OTF Group and the John F. Templeton Foundation of the United States, and promotes companies in East Africa by identifying local role models that act as examples of sustainable businesses in their country/region. It is open to businesses from Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda.

Five pioneers will receive US \$50,000 to re-invest in their business. It is open to for-profit businesses that provide high wages to their workers and that operate in sustainable ways.

[Website: Pioneers of Prosperity](http://www.pioneersofprosperity.org)

■ **African Writers Fund**

--Together with the Ford Foundation, the Fund supports the work of independent creative writers living on the continent. The Fund recognizes the vital role that poets and novelists play in Africa by anticipating and reflecting the cultural, economic and political forces that continuously shape and reshape societies.

[Website: http://www.trustafrica.org](http://www.trustafrica.org)

■ **Joint NAM S&T Centre - ICCS Fellowship Programme**

--Centre for Science and Technology of the Non-Aligned and Other Developing Countries (NAM S&T Centre) and International Center for Chemical Sciences (ICCS), (H.E.J. Research Institute of Chemistry and Dr. Panjwani Center for Molecular Medicine and Drug Research), University of Karachi, Karachi, Pakistan

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[Website: http://www.namstct.org/](http://www.namstct.org/)

■ **Oxford Said Business School Youth Business Development Competition**

--Open to youth between 16 and 21 across the world, the competition is run by students at Oxford University to promote social enterprise. A prize fund of £2,000 in seed capital is up for grabs. It calls itself the 'world's first global youth development competition'.

[Click here for more information](#)

■ **US\$250,000 for Best Lab Design**

--AMD and Architecture for Humanity have announced a prize of \$250 000 for the best design for a computer lab that can be adapted and implemented in third-world countries.

The Open Architecture Prize is the largest prize in the field of architecture and is designed to be a multi-year program that will draw competition from design teams around the world.

[Website: http://www.openarchitecturenetwork.org/](http://www.openarchitecturenetwork.org/)

■ **PhD Plant Breeding Scholarships at the University of Ghana**

The [University of Ghana](http://www.universityofghana.edu.gh) has been awarded a project support grant by the [Alliance for a Green Revolution](#) in Africa (a joint venture between the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Rockefeller Foundation, for the establishment of a West African Centre for Crop Improvement (WACCI). This is available to scientists working at NARIs, universities and international centres in West Africa. Women scientists are especially encouraged to apply for a fellowship under this programme.

[Website: http://www.acci.org.za](http://www.acci.org.za)

■ **Genesis: India's Premier Social Entrepreneurship Competition**

--A social entrepreneurship competition aiming to bring together social entrepreneurs, students, NGOs, innovators, incubators, corporations and financiers and encourage them to come up with innovative ideas which are socially relevant and feasible.

[Website: http://genesis.iitm.ac.in/](http://genesis.iitm.ac.in/)

■ **Echoing Green: Social Entrepreneurs Fund**

--They are looking for social entrepreneurs developing new solutions to social problems. They are accepting applications for their 2008 fellowships (two-year funding of up to US \$90,000 for 20 entrepreneurs).

[Website: http://www.echoinggreen.org/](http://www.echoinggreen.org/)

■ **2008 Sustainable Banking Awards**

--The Financial Times, in partnership with IFC, the private sector arm of the World Bank Group, today launched the 2008 edition of the FT Sustainable Banking Awards, the leading awards for triple bottom line banking.

Two new categories - Banking at the Bottom of the Pyramid, and Sustainable Investor of the Year - have been added to the ground-breaking programme.

The awards, now in their third year, were created by the FT and IFC to recognise banks that have shown leadership and innovation in integrating social, environmental and corporate governance objectives into their operations.

Website: <http://www.ifc.org>

■ **Challenge InnoCentive**

--A challenge to the world's inventors to find solutions to real scientific and technological problems affecting the poor and vulnerable.

Website: <http://www.innocentive.com/>

You can read more about the challenges here: <http://www.rockfound.org>

■ **Global Social Benefit Incubator: A US \$20,000 Bottom of the Pyramid Scholarship**

--Offered by Santa Clara University's Global Social Benefit Incubator, it selects 15 to 20 enterprises from developing countries and provides an eight-month mentoring process. This ends with a 10-day process in Santa Clara, where entrepreneurs work with their mentors.

Website: www.socialedge.org

Job Opportunities

■ [Africa Recruit Job Compendium](#)

■ [Africa Union](#)

■ [CARE](#)

■ [Christian Children's Fund](#)

■ [ECOWAS](#)

■ [International Crisis Group](#)

■ [International Medical Corps](#)

■ [International Rescue Committee](#)

■ [Internews](#)

■ [IREX](#)

■ [Organization for International Migration](#)

■ [Oxfam](#)

■ [Relief Web Job Compendium \(UN OCHA\) \(1\)](#)

■ [Relief Web Job Compendium \(UN OCHA\) \(2\)](#)

■ [Save the Children](#)

■ [The Development Executive Group job compendium](#)

■ [Trust Africa](#)

■ [UN Jobs](#)

■ [UNDP](#)

■ [UNESCO](#)

■ [UNICEF](#)

■ [World Bank](#)

■ [World Wildlife Fund \(Cameroon\)](#)



Please feel free to send your comments, feedback and/or suggestions to Cosmas Gitta [cosmas.gitta@undp.org] Chief, Division for Policy, Special Unit for South-South Cooperation